

THE CZAR'S SPY

The Mystery of a Silent Love
By Chevalier WILLIAM LE QUEUX
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ILLUSTRATIONS BY C. D. RHODES

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SYNOPSIS.

Gordon Gregg, dining aboard with Hornby, the yacht owner, accidentally sees a torn photograph of a young girl. That night he consults with his friend, the police chief, who tells him that the girl is a Russian. In London Gregg is trapped nearly to his death by a former servant, Olinio. Visiting in London, Gregg meets Muriel Leithour, who appears to be a friend of the girl in the photograph. In the morning Gregg discovers the body of a murdered woman in a rooming house. The body disappears and in its place is found the body of Olinio. Muriel and Gregg search Rannoch wood together, and find the body of Olinio, Olinio's wife. When the police go to the wood the body has disappeared. In London Gregg meets Olinio, alive and well. Gregg traces the young girl of the torn photograph, and finds that she is Elina Heath, niece of Baron Oberg, who has taken her to Abo, Finland, and that she holds a secret affecting Woodroffe. On his return to Rannoch Gregg finds the Leithour family, where he finds Elina imprisoned. A surgical operation has made her deaf and dumb. He escapes with her.

CHAPTER XI—Continued.

The unfortunate girl whom I was there to rescue drew back in fright against the wall for a single second, then, seeing that I had closed with the hulking fellow, she sprang forward, and with both hands seized the gun and attempted to wrest it from him. His fingers had lost the trigger, and he was trying to regain it to fire and so raise the alarm. I saw this, and with an old trick learned at Uppingham I tripped him, so that he staggered and nearly fell.

An oath escaped him, yet in that moment Elina succeeded in twisting the gun from his sinewy hands, which I now held with a strength begotten of a knowledge of my imminent peril. He was huge and powerful, with a strength far exceeding my own, yet I had been reckoned a good wrestler at Uppingham, and now my knowledge of that most ancient form of combat held me in good stead. He shouted for help, his deep, hoarse voice sounding along the stone corridors.

As we were struggling desperately, the English girl slipped past us with the carbine in her hand, and with a quick movement dragged open the heavy door that gave exit to the lake. I heard a splash, and saw that Elina no longer held the sentry's weapon in her hands. Then at the same moment I heard a voice outside cry in a low tone: "Courage, excellency! Courage! I will come and help you."

It was the faithful Finn, who had been awaiting me in the deep shadow, and with a few strokes pulled his boat up to the narrow rickety ledge outside the door.

"Take the lady!" I succeeded in gasping in Russian. "Never mind me," and I saw to my satisfaction that the guided Elina to step into the boat, which at that moment drifted past the little platform.

I struggled valiantly, but I was slowly being vanquished. Mine was a fight for life. A sudden idea flashed across my mind, and I continued to struggle, at the same time gradually forcing my enemy backward towards the door. He cursed and swore and shouted until, with a sudden and almost superhuman effort, I tripped him, bringing his head into violent contact with the stone lintel of the door.

There was the sound of the crashing of wood as the rotten platform gave way, a loud splash, and he sank like a stone, for although I stood watching for him to rise, I could only distinguish the woodwork floating away with the current.

As I stood there in horror at my deed of self-defense, the place suddenly resounded with shouts of alarm, and in the tower above me the great old rusty bell began to swing, ringing its brazen note across the broad expanse of waters. Behind me in the passage I saw a light and the glitter of arms. A shot rang out, and a bullet whizzed past me. Then I jumped, and nearly upset the boat, but taking an ear I began to row for life, and as we drew away from those grim, black walls the fire belched forth from three rifles.

Again the guards fired upon us, but in the darkness their aim was faulty. Lights appeared in the high windows of the castle, and we could see that the greatest commotion had been caused by the escape of the prisoner. The men at the door in the tower were shouting to the patrol boats, calling them to row us down and capture us, but by playing our oars rapidly we got straight across the lake until we shot

under the deep shadows of the opposite shore. Out in the center of the lake we could just distinguish a long boat with three rowers going swiftly towards the entrance to the river, which we so desired to gain.

The guards were rowing rapidly, the oars sounding in the rowlocks, evidently in the belief that we had made for the river. But the Finlander had apparently foreseen this, and for that reason we were lying safe from observation in the deep shadow of an overhanging tree. A gray mist was slowly rising from the water, and the Finn, noticing it, hoped that it might favor us.

"If we disembark we shall be compelled to make a detour of fully four days in the forest, in order to pass the marshes," he pointed out in a low whisper. "But if we can enter the river we can go ashore anywhere and get by foot to some place where the lady can lie in hiding."

"What do you advise? We are entirely in your hands. The chief of police told me he could trust you."

"I think it will be best to risk it," he said in Russian after a brief pause. "We will tie up the boat, and I will go along the bank and see what the guards are doing. You will remain here, and I shall not be seen. The rushes and undergrowth are higher further along. But if there is danger while I am absent get out and go straight westward until you find the marsh, then keep along its banks due south," and drawing up the boat to the bank the shrewd, big-boned fellow disappeared into the dark undergrowth.

CHAPTER XII.

Rescued and Lost.

There were no signs yet of the break of day. My ears were strained to catch the dipping of an oar or a voice, but beyond the lapping of the water beneath the boat there was no other sound. I took the hand of the fair-



With a Sudden and Almost Superhuman Effort I Tripped Him.

faced girl at my side and pressed it. In return she pressed mine. It was the only means by which we could exchange confidences. She whom I had sought through all those months sat at my side, yet powerless to utter one single word.

Suddenly I heard a stealthy footstep approaching, and next moment a low voice spoke which I recognized as that of our friend, the Finn.

"There is danger, excellency—a grave danger!" he said in a low half-whisper. "Three boats are in search of us."

And scarcely had he uttered those words when there was a flash of a rifle from the haze, a loud report, and a bullet whizzed past just behind my head.

"Quick, excellency! Fly! while there is yet time!" gasped the Finn, grasping my hand and half dragging me from the boat, while I, in turn, placed Elina upon the bank.

The three of us, heedless of the consequences, plunged forward into the

impenetrable darkness, just as our fierce pursuers came alongside where we had only a moment ago been seated. They shouted wildly as they sprang to land after us, but our guide, who had been born and bred in these forests, knew well how to travel in a circle, and how to conceal himself. It was a race for freedom—nay, for very life.

So dark that we could see before us hardly a foot, we were compelled to place our hands in front of us to avoid collision with the big tree trunks, while ever and anon we found ourselves entangled in the mass of dead creepers and vegetable parasites that formed the dense undergrowth. Around us on every side we heard the shouts and curses of our pursuers, while above the rest we heard an authoritative voice, evidently that of a sergeant of the guard, cry:

"Shoot the man, but spare the woman! The colonel wants her back. Don't let her escape! We shall be well rewarded. So keep on, comrades! Mené edemmaski!"

But the trembling girl beside me heard nothing, and perhaps indeed it was best that she should not hear.

It was an exciting chase in the darkness, as we gradually circled round our prisoners, for we knew not into what treacherous marsh we might fall. Once we saw afar through the trees the light of a lantern held by a guard, and already the sweet-faced girl beside me seemed tired and terribly fatigued.

At last, breathless, we halted to listen. We were already in sight of the gray mist where lay the silent lake that held so many secrets. There was not a sound. We crept along the water's edge, until in the gray light we could distinguish two empty boats—that of the guards and our own. We were again at the spot where we had disembarked.

"Let us row to the head of the lake," suggested the Finn. "We may then land and escape them." And a moment later we were all three in the guards' boat, rowing with all our might under the deep shadow of the bank northward, in the opposite direction to the town of Nystad. I think we must have rowed several miles, for ere we landed again, upon a low, flat and barren shore, the first gray streak of day was showing in the east.

Elina noticed it, and kept her great brown eyes fixed upon it thoughtfully. It was the dawn for her—the dawn of a new life. Our eyes met; she smiled at me, and then gazed again eastward, with silent meaning.

Having landed, we drew the boat up and concealed it in the undergrowth so that the guards, on searching, should not know the direction we had taken, and then we went straight on northward across the low-lying lands, to where the forest showed dark against the morning gray. The mist had now somewhat cleared, but to discover a path in a forest forty miles wide is a matter of considerable difficulty, and for hours we wandered on and on, but alas! always in vain.

Faint and hungry, yet we still kept courage. Fortunately we found a little spring, and all three of us drank eagerly with our hands. But of food we had nothing, save a small piece of hard rye bread which the Finn had in his pocket, the remains of his evening meal, and this we gave to Elina, who, half famished, ate it quickly.

How many miles we trudged I have no idea. Elina's torn shoe gave her considerable trouble, and noticing her limping, I induced her to sit down while I took it off, hoping to be able to mend it, but, having unlaced it, I saw that upon her stocking was a large patch of congealed blood, where her foot itself had also been cut. I managed to beat the nails of the shoe with a stone, so that its sole should not be lost, and she readjusted it, allowing me to lace it up for her and smiling the while.

Forward we trudged, ever forward, across that enormous forest where the myriad tree trunks presented the same dismal scene everywhere, a forest undimmed save by wild, half-savage lumbermen. My only fear was that we should be compelled to spend another night without shelter, and what its effect might be upon the delicately reared girl whose hand I held tenderly in mine. Surely my position was a strange one. Her terrible affliction seemed to cause her to be entirely dependent upon me.

Suddenly, just as the yellow sun-flicker overhead had begun to fade, the flat-faced Finn, whose name he had told me was Felix Estlander, cried joyfully:

"Polshatse! Look, excellency! Ah! The road at last!"

And as we glanced before us we saw that his quick, well-trained eyes had detected away in the twilight, at some distance, a path traversing our vista among the tree trunks.

Elina made a gesture of renewed hope, and all three of us redoubled our pace, expecting every moment to come upon some log hut, the owner of which would surely give us hospitality for the night. But darkness came on quickly, and yet we still pushed forward. Poor Elina was limping, and I

knew that her injured foot was painful, even though she could tell me nothing.

At last we saw before us a light shining in a window, and five minutes later Felix was knocking at the door, and asking in Finnish the occupant to give hospitality to a lady lost in the forest.

We heard a low growl like a muttering impatience within, and when the door opened there stood upon the threshold a tall, bearded, muscular old fellow in a dirty red shirt, with a big revolver shining in his hand.



A Tall, Bearded, Muscular Old Fellow, With a Big Revolver.

A quick glance at us satisfied him that we were not thieves, and he invited us in while Felix explained that we had landed from the lake, and our boat having drifted away we had been compelled to take to the woods. The man heard the Finn's picturesque story, and then said something to me which Felix translated into Russian.

"Your excellency is welcome to all the poor fare he has. He gives up his bed in the room yonder to the lady, so that she may rest. He is honored by your excellency's presence."

And while he was making this explanation the wood cutter stirred the red embers whereon a big pot was simmering, and sending forth an appetizing odor, and in five minutes we were all three sitting down to a stew of capercailzie, with a foaming light beer as a fitting beverage.

After we had finished our meal I asked the sturdy old fellow for a pencil, but the nearest thing he possessed was a stick of thick charcoal, and with that it was surely difficult to communicate with our fair companion. Therefore she rose, gave me her hand, bowed smilingly, and then passed into the inner room and closed the door, while we threw ourselves wearily upon the wooden benches and slept soundly.

Suddenly, however, at early dawn, we were startled by a loud banging at the door, the clattering of hoofs, and authoritative shouts in Russian. The old wood cutter sprang up, and, looking through a chink in the heavy shutters, turned to us with blanched face, whispering breathlessly:

"The police! What can they want of me?"

"Open!" shouted the horseman outside. "Open in the name of his majesty!"

Felix made a dash for the door of the inner room, where Elina had retired, but next second he reappeared, gasping in Russian:

"Excellency! Why, the door is open! The lady has gone!"

"Gone!" I cried, dismayed, rushing into the little room, where I found the truckle couch empty and the door leading outside wide open. She had actually disappeared!

The police again battered at the opposite door, threatening loudly to break it in if it were not opened at once, whereupon the old wood cutter drew the bolt and admitted them. Two big, hulking fellows in heavy riding coats and swords strode in, while two others remained mounted outside, holding the horses.

"Your names?" demanded one of the fellows, glancing at us as we stood together in expectation.

Our host told them his name, and asked why they wished to enter.

"We are searching for a woman who has escaped from Kajana," was the reply. "Have you seen any woman here?"

"No," responded the wood cutter. "We never see any woman out in these woods."

"Who is your chief?" I inquired, as a sudden thought occurred to me.

"Melnikoff, at Helsingfors."

MAY MEAN END OF ALL WAR

Development of Destructive Airship Sure to Have Powerful Effect on Humanity.

The difficulty of properly arming and protecting aircraft lies in the fact that we cannot yet obtain sufficiently powerful engines—even though, in the course of a few years, the engines have increased in horsepower from about fifty to two hundred, says Claude Grahame-White in the Youth's Companion. But when we look ahead, and estimate what may be possible with a power plant, not of hundreds of horse power, but of thousands, then we can imagine a perfected war machine, of the future—a huge armored craft, that carries a crew of hundreds of men, and that is equipped with formidable guns and aerial torpedo and bomb-dropping tubes. Such a vessel will be able to reef its wing surfaces when travelling at high speed, and will rush through the air at a speed of several hundred miles an hour.

But even against such metal-built

"Then this is not in the district of Abo?"

"No. But what difference does it make? Who are you?"

"Gordon Gregg, British subject," I replied.

"And you are the drosky driver from Abo," remarked the fellow, turning to Felix. "Exactly as I thought. You are the pair who bribed the man at Kajana, and succeeded in releasing the Englishwoman. In the name of the czar, I arrest you!"

The old wood cutter turned pale as death. We certainly were in grave peril, for I foresaw the danger of falling into the hands of Baron Oberg, the Stranger of Finland. Yet we had a satisfaction in knowing that, be the mystery what it might, Elina had escaped.

"And on what charge, pray, do you presume to arrest me?" I inquired as coolly as I could.

"For aiding a prisoner to escape." "Then I wish to say, first, that you have no power to arrest me; and, secondly, that if you wish me to give you satisfaction, I am perfectly willing to do so, providing you first accompany me down to Abo."

"It is outside my district," growled the fellow, but I saw that his hesitancy was due to his uncertainty as to who I really might be.

"I desire you to take me to the Chief of Police Boranski, who will make all the explanation necessary. Until we have an interview with him, I refuse to give any information concerning myself," I said.

"But you have a passport?"

"I drew it from my pocket, saying: 'It proves, I think that my name is what I have told you.'"

The fellow, standing aside, read it, and handed it back to me.

"Where is the woman?" he demanded.

"Tell me."

"I don't know," was the reply.

"Perhaps you will tell me," he said, turning to the old wood cutter with a sinister expression upon his face. "Remember, these fugitives are found in your house, and you are liable to arrest."

"I don't know—indeed I don't!" protested the old fellow, trembling beneath the officer's threat. Like all his class, he feared the police, and held them in dread.

"Ah, you don't remember, I suppose!" he smiled. "Well, perhaps your memory will be refreshed by a month or two in prison. You are arrested."

"But, your excellency, I—"

"Enough!" blared the bristly officer. "You have given shelter to conspirators. You know the penalty in Finland for that, surely?"

"But these gentlemen are surely not conspirators!" the poor old man protested. "His excellency is English, and the English do not plot."

"We shall see afterwards," he laughed.

A dozen times was the old wood cutter questioned, but he stubbornly refused to admit that he had ever set eyes upon Elina. I knew, of course, by what he had overheard said by the prison guards, that the governor general was extremely anxious to recapture the girl with whom, I frankly admit, I had now so utterly fallen in love. And it appeared that no effort was being spared to search for us. But what could be the truth of Elina's disappearance? Had she fled of her own accord, or had she once more fallen a victim to some ingenious and dastardly plot. That gray dress of hers might, I recollected, betray her if she dared to venture near any town, while her affliction would, of itself, be plain evidence of identification. All I hoped was that she had gone and hidden herself in the forest somewhere in the vicinity to wait until the danger of recapture had passed.

For as long as possible I succeeded in delaying our departure, but at length, just as the yellow sun began to struggle through the gray clouds, we were all three compelled to depart in sorrowful procession.

At nine o'clock I stood in the big, bare office of Michael Boranski, where only a short time before we had had such a heated argument. As soon as the chief of police had entered, he recognized me under arrest, and dismissed my guards with a wave of the hand—all save the officer who had brought me there. He listened to the officer's story of my arrest without saying a word.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Audacity of Woman Spies.

A climax to the audacity of spies is said to have been reached in the case of a woman pretending to be English and giving her name as Miss Booth, who, in connection with another woman calling herself Baroness de Rosen, organized a charitable work at the Gare du Nord, in Paris, which they called "For the Wounded and for the Refugees." The former, suspected of illicit communication with the Germans, passed before a court-martial and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, while the latter, against whom no tangible proof could be produced, was invited to leave French territory within 48 hours.

River Names.

Nanemond, the name of a river in Virginia, is from the Indian word Nannamond, "the place from which we were driven away." The Flint, in Michigan, was called by the Indians Perwontio, "the river of the flint," from the abundance of this stone on its banks. Humboldt river, in Nevada, was named by Fremont in honor of Baron Humboldt.

monsters of the air, flying at their amazing speeds, man will pit his ingenuity. It is clear that he cannot fight them from the earth; he must fight them high in their own element. So in the future, if wars continue, we may have fearful struggles of the air—not small and isolated combats, such as this campaign has shown us, but battles desperately waged, with death and destruction raining from the clouds. There are those, however, who argue that such a form of war, when pushed to its ruthless limit, will prove so ghastly that humanity will revolt, and that the science that revolutionizes war will also end it.

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NEWS and GOSSIP OF WASHINGTON



Why the Wives of Consuls Are Important Now

WASHINGTON—Nowadays, before sending anybody out in the diplomatic and consular service, the state department takes especial care to inquire into the antecedents of the wife of the appointee, if he has one. It does not do for an American in the service, even if his own blood be American beyond question, to have a wife who is of foreign extraction or once or twice removed. The European war will not tolerate such.

The state department was recently taught the lesson through the selection of an American who had passed a splendid examination and who was assigned to an English post in the consular service. The selection seemed impeccable, but no one thought of the man's wife, for to all appearances she seemed as good an American as he. The English government, however, was not so careless and no sooner had the consul and his wife appeared on English soil than the American government was informed that they were persona non grata on account of the German extraction of the consul's wife. There was nothing else to do but to recall them. They were on British soil just one week.

As the compensation for traveling in the consular service is only five cents a mile, the journey of this couple has proved quite expensive, to say nothing of the humiliation the incident imposed. Meantime the state department has provided a place for the consul in the service in Washington until an opening shall occur at a post not involved in the war. And these are not many.

Crows Fight Fiercely in White House Grounds

A VICIOUS fight between two crows in the White House grounds attracted such a large crowd that Policeman Gus Schraeder had to interpose and almost club the two birds before he could induce them to break away. One had the other by the neck and was trying to pull his head off when Schraeder stood over the two and flourished his arms and club in such a threatening way that the grip was released and the two flew off to trees close by, making a terrible clatter about the affair.

Several families of crows have for years flourished in the White House grounds, but they seem to have formed a combination to keep other birds out of the good things they enjoy there. According to Schraeder, who is not stuck on crows, either, a big male crow from some other reservation ventured into the White House grounds and was promptly tackled. He was game, too, and the fight started.

Persons passing along began to stop to watch the battle, and the crowd grew to large proportions. Teamsters and automobile drivers stopped their vehicles and joined the throng. Schraeder was some distance away and did not notice what was going on until the crowd grew into large proportions. Then he hustled down to the scene and went for the birds, which paid no attention to him until he actually stood over them and flourished his arms in a menacing manner.

Oldest employees of the White House grounds, where birds of all kinds make their home, never saw or heard of such a bloody scrap among feathered fighters. Crows are generally credited with being the most cowardly and cautious of all birds, and are easily whipped by a small bee martin, from which they will flee for miles if pursued. Schraeder has been much perturbed over the affair, fearing that it is a bad omen of some kind.

Moon Myths Shattered by Houston's Department

THE department of agriculture has smashed another tradition by declaring that from a scientific standpoint the moon has no more to do with the growing of crops than it has upon the temperature, the amount of rain, the wind, or any other element of weather. This will be a severe blow to those who have believed that potatoes in order to be a successful crop, should be planted during certain phases of the moon, or that garden truck flourishes more readily under moon influence when planted right.

The department points out that growth of plants depends upon the amount of food in the soil and in the air that is available for them, and upon temperature, light and moisture.

The moon gives no virility to soil, neither does it affect the composition of atmosphere, hence the only remaining way by which it could influence plant growth is by its light. Experiments have shown that full daylight is about 600,000 times brighter than full moonlight, yet when a plant gets one-one-hundredth part of normal daylight it thrives little better than in total darkness. If one-one-hundredth part of normal daylight is too little to stimulate a plant, the department says that it is certain that one-six-hundredth part would impart no benefit at all.

It is added that it is a waste of time to think about the moon in this connection with the planting of crops, since it has no more to do with this than it has with the building of fences, the time for killing hogs, or any other of the innumerable things over which it was once supposed to have strong influence.

Music in Canoes Charms Potomac River Fishes

MUSIC bath charms for fish, according to an expert of the bureau of fisheries, and if that is true fishing should be good in the Upper Potomac this summer. However, the bureau of fisheries has not installed brass bands or player pianos at points along the shore for the benefit of Washington's anglers.

If the fish bite better during the summer the fishermen should thank the sentimental young folk, who have discovered a summer substitute for the tango dance hall. They have placed graphophones in their canoes, and one strolling along the banks of the river above the Aqueduct bridge these evenings hears soft strains rising here and there on the black surface.